



# **SHIRE OF MOORA**

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER FOR**

### **WASTEWATER SERVICES**

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 The role of this charter

This charter sets out the broad philosophy of the Shire of Moora (SOM) in supplying sewerage services to the town of Moora in accordance with our operating licence issued to the SOM by the approving authority Economic Regulatory Authority under the Water Services Licensing Act 1995.

The charter informs you, the customer of the SOM, of your rights in accordance with the provisions of the operating licence, including service interruptions, levels of service, complaints procedures. If you would like a copy of the operating licence please contact the SOM at the number below or the Economic Regulatory Authority 92131900.

The SOM will review this Charter annually.

### 1.2 Our commitment to service

The SOM will provide its service in a manner, which is fair, courteous and timely – with a focus on consultation with our customers, respecting your rights, and meeting your reasonable expectations.

### 1.3 Service we provide

The SOM will use its best endeavors to provide a service to collect, treat and dispose of domestic sewage discharged from each customers' property to the SOM sewer system. In addition, the Shire of Moora shall provide other services on terms agreed upon between the customer and the SOM.

The areas of operation of the Shire of Moora sewer scheme are as follows:

- Lots serviced by reticulated sewer mains in the town site of Moora. The area of operation of the SOM is as indicated on Office of Water

Regulation Plan Number OWR-OA-058/2 (B), as issued by the Economic Regulation Authority. The plan is available for inspection at the Office of the Economic Regulation Authority Level 6, 197 St Georges Terrace Perth and the Shire of Moora Administration Offices 34 Padbury Street Moora

#### **1.4 How to contact us**

##### Account and General Enquiries (including application for connections)

Postal Address: PO Box 211,

Moora WA 6510

Office Hours: 9.00am to 4.30pm

Telephone number: (08) 9651 1401

Facsimile number: (08) 9651 1722

Contact officer: Manager of Health, Building and Planning Services

Email: moorashire@wn.com.au

#### **1.5 Faults and Emergency assistance**

The SOM via the Water Corporation maintains a 24-hour emergency service for emergency events, such as an overflow from a sewer. The fault reporting and emergency customer service telephone number is 131375.

Note: Blockages and faults which occur inside the property line and before the connection point are the responsibility of the landowner/occupier of the property.

## **2.0 Your Basic Rights**

### **2.1 Your rights to domestic wastewater services**

Subject to the Water Services Licensing Act 1995 and the Water Agencies (Power) Act 1984 ('The Water Acts') the SOM shall provide a service for the removal, treatment and disposal of wastewater under the terms set out in this Charter and the Operating Licence. In certain

circumstances, the SOM may supply water for other than drinking purposes (eg; treated effluent) in a manner agreed with the customer.

The SOM shall test and dispose of wastewater in an environmentally responsible manner. All wastewater treatment plants shall operate in accordance with the licence conditions set by, and or agreements with, the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Occasionally some odours occur in the treatment plant and these may affect nearby residents. The SOM shall respond to complaints of odours by investigating the report and advising the customer of the outcome within one day.

## **2.2 Your rights to industrial and commercial wastewater service**

Industrial and commercial wastewater may be accepted for discharge to the SOM's wastewater system subject to compliance with the SOM requirements. An agreement with a customer for industrial and wastewater services to be provided by the SOM shall be documented in an industrial waste permit issued by the SOM.

## **2.3 Your rights in relation to sewage spills**

If a sewer overflow occurs on your property due to failure of the SOM's sewer scheme, representatives of the SOM shall be on site as soon as possible and within two hours of being notified. Action shall be taken to restore the service, clean up the affected area and minimise any damage or inconvenience.

## **2.4 Your rights to consultation and information**

The SOM is committed to involving its customers in issues relating to its programmes and services. Community involvement in the SOM's service planning and decision making processes will be sought through forums such as focus groups, customer surveys, and displays at local functions. The SOM will use local media bulletins to advise

customers of any system change that may result in significant variation in its service levels.

The SOM will publish, and make available at its premises, information on matters relating to its wastewater services and on other aspects such as charging and complaints handling. Information regarding these matters can be obtained from the SOM's business office at 34 Padbury Street Moora.

The SOM's representatives will provide identification, their name and section when engaged in business discussions with customers.

## **2.5 Your rights to assistance, redress and compensation**

If the SOM's activities have caused damage to your property or disruption to you, such as a sewer overflow, the SOM shall deal with the matter in a fair and business-like matter, whether or not a complaint is received. The SOM may rectify damage and, as necessary and reasonable, compensate you subject to any relevant Act.

## **2.6 Charges and accounts**

Statements of account for outstanding charges are issued on a regular basis. In addition the SOM shall supply additional statements of account on request and a fee is charged for this service.

Utility service availability and other charges are made against the owner of the land to which services are available or supplied and are the responsibility of the property owner. A property owner is responsible for payment of the charges set by the SOM as applicable to the property.

An account shall be regarded as having been delivered when it is transmitted to a property owner at the address notified to the SOM by the property owner or the property owner's agent. It is the property owner's responsibility to notify the SOM of any change of address.

If an error is made in the charges which results in a customer paying less than the correct amount, the customer may be required to pay the correct amount upon request.

The SOM may charge interest on overdue accounts as prescribed by By-laws made under the Water Agencies (Charges) By-laws 1987. Also, if a customer's cheque is not honoured for any reason, the SOM may pass on any costs incurred.

The SOM can make special financial arrangements to assist customers experiencing hardship in the payment of their accounts. Information on these options is available from the SOM's offices or by calling the telephone numbers shown on your account.

If an error is made resulting in a customer paying more than the correct amount, the excess amount shall be held in credit for a future charge, or refunded, at the direction of the customer.

The SOM has the discretion to make refunds, adjustments and waive or defer payments.

## **2.7 Connecting to our services**

Applications for wastewater service connections should be made at the SOM's business office. These applications must be accompanied by the related building plans. Single applications for approval shall be processed on receipt at the SOM business office. Multiple applications shall be processed with 14 business days of receipt.

Where the SOM wastewater reticulation main is available to your land and has the capacity for the required service, the SOM shall, on application by you, approve connection to the wastewater system, under the terms and conditions set out in this Charter, the Operating Licence and the Water Services Licensing Act 1995 or other relevant Acts.

Where a junction to an available sewer does not exist, a junction may be provided by the SOM, by arrangement with the licenced plumber installing the property sewer. No fee applies where a service availability charge has been applied to a property, except for property subject to redevelopment.

If the SOM wastewater system is available to a property, which produces or has capacity to produce wastewater, it is a requirement for the property owner to connect to the system.

## 2.8 Disconnection

If the wastewater service is no longer required by you, a disconnection from the SOM service may be approved provided that;

- The SOM is first notified of the intention, and
- A fee is paid to the SOM which shall arrange the disconnection, and
- The property has no further wastewater disposal requirement and
- The disconnection is carried out by a licensed plumber

In most circumstances, disconnection of a wastewater service does not terminate this Charter. The SOM is required under 'the Water Acts' and Operating Licence to levy a service availability charge to the owner of land (including vacant land) where wastewater services are available for connection. The Charter is void if there were no services available and no charges levied.

The SOM shall reconnect its service at your request and on compliance with the terms and conditions of this Charter. A reconnection fee shall apply.

## 2.9 Enquiries, suggestions, complaints and disputes

The SOM values your enquiries and suggestions on ways it can improve its services. If you have an enquiry or suggestion you can telephone the Shire of Moora on 08 96511401 during business hours.



You will receive prompt, courteous and helpful reply and will be told who is handling your enquiry.

Telephone calls to the emergency numbers shall be answered promptly and advice of action to be taken and timing given within one hour of your call. General written correspondence will be replied to as soon as possible within 10 business days. Over the counter and telephone enquiries will be responded to within 48 hours.

When you lodge a complaint, (either in writing or verbally) the SOM shall address the issue in a timely and efficient manner. A representative of the Utility shall respond in person within 5 business days of a complaint being lodged. Where this response advises the need for further assessment you shall receive a written reply within 10 business days.

If you are not satisfied with a solution offered or action taken on a complaint, you may seek referral to the SOM's Chief Executive Officer, who shall investigate the complaint, assess the appropriateness of the SOM's response and either confirm or amend the SOM's proposed solution or action.

If the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction within 21 days, you may refer the matter to the Department of Water. The Department of Water will seek a detailed explanation of the nature of the complaint, the solutions or actions offered by the SOM and the reasons why these are not acceptable to you. The Department of Water will respond with its opinion on the matter and suggest a solution to the parties involved. Contact details for the Department of Water are as follows:

Department of Water  
The Atrium 168 St Georges Terrace  
PERTH, WA 6000

Postal:

PO Box K822  
PERTH, WA 6842

Tel: (08) 6364 7600 Fax: (08) 6364 7601  
[www.water.wa.gov.au](http://www.water.wa.gov.au)

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may submit the matters to arbitration by an Arbitrator selected by you from a list prepared by the Economic Regulation Authority. The Arbitrator's decision, including award of costs, shall be binding on both parties and will preclude further action on the matter. You may elect to bypass the arbitration process and take legal action to resolve the matter.

### **3.0 Our Powers**

#### **3.1 Entry to your property**

The circumstances in which the SOM's representatives may enter your property to carry out investigations and/or work on the SOM wastewater system, are set out in the Health Act 1911, Water Service Licensing Act (1995) or other relevant Acts. Any such entry shall normally occur during business hours, except in cases of emergency. For planned work within a property, the SOM or its representatives shall advise the occupier in advance. In cases of emergency, the occupier, if present, shall be informed of the repairs to be undertaken and the anticipated length of time for the work.

#### **3.2 Rectifying defective work**

If the SOM becomes aware of the presence of any defective or improper work forming part of your wastewater pipes and fittings which may impair the effective operation of the SOM's system, it may serve a notice requiring you to remedy any such defect or improper work within a specified time.

If the terms of the notice are not followed, the SOM may enter the customer's property to remedy the defective or improper work. This action, if taken, shall be in accordance with the relevant Acts and the full costs of any remedial work shall be charged to the customer.

### **3.3 Service interruptions**

The SPM wastewater services are designed to be available 24 hours a day. However, the SOM may interrupt, postpone or limit its wastewater services to customers:

- If any part of works is damaged, for example, by bursting, blockages or breakdowns; or
- If it is necessary to inspect, maintain, repair or replace any part of works; or
- For connection of new works or services; or
- If an event occurs beyond the SOM's control, including acts by others, sabotage, flood, earthquake, power or water shortage or industrial action.

The SOM will endeavour to limit the length and occurrence of disruption of services. Except in emergencies, the SOM shall give notice to you of its intention to interrupt, postpone or limit the supply of services for the purpose of regular maintenance or works programs. Unless interruptions are limited to a few minutes, notification shall be given to domestic customers - at least 24 hours prior, and for commercial and industrial customers - at least 7 days prior or by agreement.

### **3.4 Maintenance**

The SOM's wastewater services are provided from the point where the pipes serving your property connect to the SOM's wastewater reticulation main.

Wastewater reticulation mains (sewers) and associated fittings remain the property of the SOM whether or not they are located within private

property. The location of these structures may be obtained from the SOM office. You are required to ensure that the SOM's pipeline and structures are reasonably accessible, are not interfered with, covered, built close to, built over, or damaged.

Prior to undertaking building or construction activity on land connected or capable of being connected, it is a requirement to gain the SOM's approval. In the first instance, you should contact the SOM office. Unauthorised property improvements that interfere with the Shire of Moora's assets may be required to be removed at your cost.

The SOM is responsible for the maintenance of sewer property connections where they are unable to be cleared or repaired from the inspection shaft – provided that the depth of the repair job is 2.5 meters or more, and/or the fault in the property connection is outside the property concerned.

You are responsible for all plumbing, pipes and fixtures on or serving your property to the point where pipe connect to the SOM's sewer property connection. Where the sewer property connection is at a depth of less than 2.5 meters and is situated within the property boundary, you are responsible for maintenance of the property sewer connection.

### **3.5 Discharge of Unauthorised substances**

It is your responsibility to ensure that storm water (including roof runoff) and other unauthorised substances are not discharged into the SOM's sewers. Certain waste products are not suitable for disposal in the SOM's wastewater system because of their nature and ability to pollute. Specialised procedures for disposal are required for substances such as:

- Cooking oil and grease – these should be placed in a container or wrapped and placed in the rubbish bin;
- Paint, paint thinners, dry cleaning fluids, engine oil, solvents, acids, alkalis, laboratory chemicals, kerosene, garden poisons,

polishes or cleaning products – such substances should be recycled through the Industrial Waste Exchange (the Office of Waste Management, Department of Environment) or be deposited at a local council collection point for these materials; and

- Products like disposable nappies, panty hose, sanitary napkins, tampons, cotton buds, syringes, toilet deodorant packs and razors – these should be wrapped and placed in the rubbish bin.

### **3.6 Limitation or withdrawal of services**

The SOM may discontinue its wastewater services in the following circumstances:

- If you do not comply with the terms and conditions of this Charter;
- If there is a public health, environment and/or safety risk to the SOM's services from your service connection (eg; backflow risk or unauthorised industrial waste discharge),
- If you do not pay, or meet and made arrangements to pay, overdue charges for the services.

If there is a health and safety risk the SOM shall discontinue service immediately. In all other cases, the SOM shall provide 24 hours notice in writing of its intention to refuse or alter or restrict its services.

The SOM shall reinstate its supply of services at your request and on compliance with the terms and conditions of this Charter. A fee applies for this service.

### **3.7 Liability**

The SOM is liable for any loss or damage that you may suffer:

- As a result of a breach of this Charter by the Shire of Moora, its servants or agents; and

- As the result of a negligent act or omission by the SOM, its servants or agents;
- As a result of the failure to meet standards prescribed by its Operating Licence or regulations (if any)

The SOMs's liability is limited as follows:

Section 35 of the Water Services Licensing Act (1995) allows The SOM to interrupt, suspend or restrict the provision of a water service if, in the SOM's opinion it is necessary to do so because of an accident, emergency potential danger or other unavoidable cause. The SOM is not liable for any loss or damage that arises from any such interruption, suspension or restriction unless the customer has an agreement with the SOM which expressly states that the SOM is, to the extent that the agreement states, liable in those circumstances.

The SOM's liability under breach of Charter is limited to the rights of compensation and redress set out in this Charter. The SOM's's liability for failure to meet prescribed standards is limited to the amount prescribed as a penalty in its Operating Licence or regulations.